

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMCONSUL MONTERREY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1259

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

UNCLAS MONTERREY 0344

SAO PAULO FOR FRANCIS X. LAMBERT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, AFSP, MX

SUBJ: SERIOUS PERSONNEL WORKLOAD PROBLEM IN MONTERREY'S VISA
SECTIONS REQUIRES IMMEDIATE REMEDIAL ACTION.

1. VISA SECTION AT MONTERREY HAS NOT BEEN PLEASANT PLACE TO WORK FOR SOME TIME. CONTINUOUSLY AND RAPIDLY GROWING VISA WORKLOAD COUPLED WITH STATIC PERSONNEL SITUATION HAS PLACED INCREASING STRAIN ON BOTH LOCALS AND OFFICERS. FSL MORALE HAS BEEN DANGEROUSLY LOW FOR PAST FEW MONTHS AND HAS NOW REACHED BREAKING POINT. ONE LOCAL HAS SUBMITTED LETTER OF RESIGNATION AND OTHERS THREATEN TO FOLLOW.

2. WE DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT LOCAL EMPLOYEES TO COPE WITH OUR VISA WORKLOAD. IN ORDER STAY CURRENT, SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF OVERTIME WORK HAS BEEN REQUIRED ON DAILY BASIS FOR PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. DUE TO FINANCIAL SITUATION AT EMBASSY, MOST OF THIS OVERTIME HAS BEEN UNCOMPENSATED. LOCALS NOW STATE THEY REFUSE WORK OVERTIME EVEN IF IT COULD BE PAID. ONE EMPLOYEE HAD NERVOUS BREAKDOWN AND SEVERAL OTHERS ARE UNDER MEDICAL TREATMENT. GIRLS' FAMILIES ARE PLACING PRESSURE ON THEM TO RESIGN AND SEEK OTHER EMPLOYMENT. SINCE MOST OF OUR LOCALS FROM UPPER CLASS MONTERREY FAMILIES, SALARY IS NOT IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THIS SITUATION.

3. DEPARTMENT IS AWARE FROM VISA REPORTS AND MONTERREY'S
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CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONSULAR PACKAGE OF TREMENDOUS INCREASE OUR

VISA WORKLOAD AND REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, IMMIGRANT VISA CASE LOAD ROSE FROM 17000 IN FY 1971 TO ESTIMATED 34,000 IN FY 1974. THIS DOUBLING OF WORKLOAD OCCURED IN RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD AND WITH NO INCREASE IN LOCAL STAFF. WHAT CAN NOT BE FOUND IN STATISTICS HOWEVER ARE THE INTANGEABLE FACTORS. OUR CONSULAR DISTRICT IS SIZE OF TEXAS AND INCLUDES U.S. BORDER-AREA, WHICH RESULTS IN UNENDING STREAM OF TELEPHONE CALLS AND VISITORS WITH SPECIAL VISA PROBLEMS, INCLUDING NUMBER OF AMCIT VISITORS AND CALLERS WITH PERSONAL INTEREST IN SPECIFIC NIV AND IV CASES.

4. ONLY 1 PERCENT OF IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICANTS HAVE LABOR CERTIFICATIONS. OTHER 99 PERCENT ARE REGISTERED ON BASIS RELATIVES IN U. S. VAST MAJORITY OF OUR IMMIGRANT APPLICANTS ARE COMPLETELY OR FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE PEASANTS DRAWN FROM FARMS WHO ARRIVE EACH DAY WITH CRYING CHILDREN AND CRUMPLED DOCUMENTS. DOCUMENTS CHECKING TAKES UNUSUALLY LONG TIME SINCE OUR PEASANTS PRESENT DISORGANIZED PAPERS AND FORMS WHICH MUST BE CORRECTED. INTERVIEWING ALSO IS TIME-CONSUMING SINCE 20 PERCENT OF OUR APPLICANTS ARE FOUND TO HAVE THEIR APPLICATIONS BASED ON SHAM OR BIGAMOUS MARRIAGES AND OVER 40 PERCENT PRESENT BOGUS JOB LETTERS. EVEN STATE GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS ARE OFTEN FOUND TO BE FRAUDULENT AND SO MUST BE CHECKED CAREFULLY. IF MONTERREY WERE OSLO OR BERN, WHERE APPLICANTS LARGELY ARE LITERATE, HAVE LABOR CERTIFICATIONS AND GENUINE DOCUMENTS, WE WOULD PROCESS IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICANTS AT A FASTER PACE. CIRCUMSTANCES AT MONTERREY DICTATE OTHERWISE.

5. OUR NONIMMIGRANT VISA UNIT, WHICH IS TENTH LARGEST IN WORLD BY VOLUME, CONSISTS OF ONE OFFICER AND TWO LOCALS. IT IS NOW CONFRONTED WITH MORE APPLICANTS THAT IT CAN HANDLE, SOME 220 DAILY, WITH CONSTANT TELEPHONE CALLS AND THE EVERPRESENT PROBLEM OF FRAUDULENT DOCUMENTS. THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION. LETTER OF RESIGNATION IS FROM ONE OF TWO NONIMMIGRANT LOCALS; SHE HAS SIX YEARS EXPERIENCE. OTHER NIV LOCAL UNDER MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR NERVES AND MAY RESIGN SHORTLY.

6. IN ORDER FORESTALL THESE RESIGNATIONS, WHICH WOULD SERIOUSLY CRIPPLE UNIT SINCE NEW EMPLOYEES WOULD HAVE BE HIRED AND TRAINED, ONE IMMIGRANT VISA LOCAL WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO UNCLASSIFIED

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NONIMMIGRANT VISA WORK FULLTIME AND ONE IMMIGRANT VISA OFFICER PART-TIME. THIE MEANS THAT IMMIGRANT VISA APPOINTMENTS WILL HAVE BE REDUCED AND AN ADMINISTRATIVE BACKLOG WILL OCCUR. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THIS IS PREFERABLE TO FSL RESIGNATIONS AND A RESULTING UNCONTROLLED BACKLOG SITUATION. WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO STAY CURRENT WITH WESTERN HEMISPHERE IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICANTS AND WILL USE IMMEDIATE RELATIVE CASES FOR BACKLOG.

7. ANY EFFORT TO PREVENT DEVELOPMENT OF BACKLOG BY ATTEMPTING TO CONTINUE CURRENT INTOLERABLE SITUATION WOULD EVEN IN SHORT TERM BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. FSL RESIGNATIONS WOULD MEAN ADDITIONAL STAFF SHORTAGES AND/OR AN INCREASING PERCENTAGE OF NEW INEXPERIENCED LOCALS. RESULT WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE LOWER EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY, ESPECIALLY SINCE BASIC WORKLOAD DIFFICULTY WOULD REMAIN WITH US. BACKLOG PROBLEM WOULD ONLY BE EXACERBATED.

8. APART FROM IMMEDIATE STOP-GAP MEASURE, SITUATION IN LONG-RUN CAN ONLY BE CORRECTED BY CREATION ONE ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITION NOW AND ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITION LATER IN FY-1975. WE REALIZE THAT MANY VISA MILLS ARE UNDERSTAFFED, BUT OUR CURRENT LOCAL PERSONNEL SITUATION IS BOTH GENUINE AND CRITICAL. DEPT. MUST FACE FACT THAT ASSURANCES OF ANOTHER CONSULAR PACKAGE OR GAO REPORT ARE NO LONGER ENOUGH. PERSONNEL CAN BE PUSHED ONLY SO FAR, AND MONTERREY HAS REACHED BREAKING POINT.

THE PROBLEM IS NOT ONE OF A TEMPORARY WORKLOAD PEAK. THE SECULAR TREND OF OUR VISA CASE LEVEL IS AND HAS BEEN FOR SEVERAL YEARS ON A SHARPLY UPWARD CURVE. THE ONLY OPTIONS OPEN ARE EITHER IMMEDIATE AUTHORIZATION OF NECESSARY LOCAL STAFF INCREASE OR ACCEPTANCE OF CONTROLLED BUT GROWING ADMINISTRATIVE BACKLOG.

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